

ENGLISH

Introductory Statement

This is the whole school plan for Doorus National School. Doorus is a co-educational rural school with 4 class teachers and 1+ shared Special Educational Needs teachers. The following plan was developed over the last year. A collaborative approach was adopted when writing this plan to ensure that all the staff share a sense of ownership in the planning process. This current plan was updated, following Inservice webinars for the implementation of the new Primary Language Programme.

Rationale

It is hoped that this school plan will be a useful tool for teachers providing them with clear guidelines in the teaching of English and ensuring consistency and continuity in practice throughout the school.

VISION AND AIMS:

(a) Vision

Our vision in Doorus National School is to ensure that pupils are holistically developed in order to assist them in contributing and playing a fulfilling role in their own community. We see the development of their language skills as being central to this process. We believe that the ability of our pupils to communicate fluently, confidently and effectively will contribute greatly to the development of their self-esteem and their personal growth. We also believe that children leaving our school should have a competency in all aspects of the English language. We see the teaching of English as something which underpins all other subjects across the primary curriculum. We believe that language learning is a tool for lifelong learning.

(b) Aims:

The Primary Language Curriculum aims to support teachers to
(in relation to children and their lives)

- enable children to build on prior knowledge and experience of language and language learning to enhance their language learning
- encourage children of different languages and cultures to be proud of and to share their heritage
- recognise the wide variation in experience, ability and language style which children bring to language learning in school as a first step in enabling them to engage in relevant and meaningful communicative relationships.

(in relation to Children's Communication and Connection with Others)

- embrace children's uniqueness by nurturing their appreciation of their home language, their understanding of language and diversity, and their ability to use different languages, gestures and tools to communicate with people in a variety of contexts and situations
- encourage and enable children to communicate effectively in both the first and second language of the school and to communicate in their

heritage language for a variety of purposes

- enable children to fully engage with and enjoy a wide range of relevant and meaningful linguistic and communicative experiences with peers and adults.

(in relation to Children's Language Learning and Development)

- promote a positive disposition towards communication and language by fostering within children a lifelong interest in and a love of language learning for personal enjoyment and enrichment
- broaden children's understanding of the world through a rich variety of language experiences and through fostering an awareness and appreciation of other languages and cultures in an enriching learning environment
- encourage children to engage personally with and think critically about a broad range of spoken, gesticulated, written and multimodal texts
- support children to develop their literacy skills and enable them to progress at their own learning pace in oral language, reading and writing
- nurture within children an awareness of language, allowing them to appreciate and understand the content and structure of languages and acquire a basic understanding of the history of languages and other cultures.

The Primary Language Curriculum sets out an image of children as communicators, readers, writers and thinkers, and a vision and understanding of primary classrooms as places where children are enabled to progress at their own pace in environments and relationships which are supportive, engaging and inclusive.

Elements

Doorús N.S. recognises the centrality and unique position of English in the Curriculum. We acknowledge that children learn language and learn through language, and that language learning is an integrated process in which it is difficult to separate the functions of oral language, reading and writing. (Curriculum p.2) We recognise that teachers are expected to be familiar with the strands and elements of language. These elements are:

- Developing communicative relationships through language
(Communicating)
- Understanding the content and structure of language (Understanding)
- Exploring and using language (Exploring and Using)

The elements are interdependent, and are based on the strands of

- Oral Language/ Speaking and Listening
- Reading
- Writing

Methodologies:

- talk and discussion
- collaborative learning
- active learning
- use of the environment
- problem-solving
- developing skills through content

Broad Objectives, Content and Methodologies

The broad objectives, content and methodologies for the teaching and learning of oral language, reading and writing are detailed in this document. Each of these areas is presented under the strand headings of the Revised English Curriculum, and reflects best current practice and pedagogy.

2.1 Oral Language:

Approach to Oral Language:

Our agreed approach to Oral Language will draw on three strands of the PLC.

Content:

Developing Communicative relationships through language

- Engagement, listening and attention (intentionality, verbal memory)
- Social conventions and awareness of others (relevance, turn-taking, extra- and para-linguistic skills)

Understanding the content and structure of language:

- Sentence Structure and grammar (syntax, morphology)
- Acquisition and use of oral vocabulary (semantics, verbal memory, articulation skills)
- Demonstration of understanding (semantics)

Exploring and using language:

- Requests and questions
- Categorisation
- Retelling and elaborating (narrative text and response)
- Playful and creative use of language (aesthetic dimension of language)
- Information giving, explanation and justification (expository text)
- Description, prediction and reflection

In planning for oral language across the strands, the following contexts are utilised:

- Talk and discussion / team work / circle time /oral reports/ instructions
- Formal and informal debates
- Play and games
- Story telling
- Improvisational Drama
- Poetry and Rhyme
- Interest talks

- Questions and Interviews

Discrete Oral Language

Form, structure, use of language and grammar are addressed during Discrete Oral Language time. Children are encouraged and taught to use correct pronunciation, grammar etc. when speaking. Discrete oral language will be addressed using curriculum objectives as guidelines e.g.

- introducing oneself and others;
- greeting others and saying good-byes;
- giving and receiving messages;
- using the telephone;
- making requests for information;
- giving directions;
- expressing appreciation;
- welcoming visitors;
- making a complaint;
- expressing sympathy etc.

(a) Integrating Oral language through the Reading and Writing process

The following oral language activities and skills will be developed through the teaching of reading and writing :

- comprehension strategies / questioning / discussion before, during & after reading
- language experience approach

- brainstorming at the pre-writing stage
- peer-conferencing and conferencing with teacher
- use of novel
- writing process, etc

(b) Cross Curricular and Disciplinary Literacy

Oral language skills are part of teaching every curricular area. They are an essential part of the following:

- all strands of Drama
- describing skills in Visual Arts
- listening & responding skills in Music
- listening skills, turn taking, expressing opinions, group work
- discussions in SESE
- Understanding the language of Maths

Planning oral language across the three strands ensures that these three areas of content are adequately addressed.

Listening Skills

Listening Skills are developed across the curriculum. Direct instruction also takes place across all levels to develop listening skills and auditory memory (This is the ability to attend to information, listen to it, process it, store it and recall it when needed).

Learning takes place through a variety of games and activities. NEPS Activities to develop receptive language and comprehension skills are available online <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/NEPS-Guides/Language-Skills/Activities-Develop-Receptive-Language-and->

2. Language Programme:

Junior & Senior Infants

(Stage 1)

- Instruction games
- Elaboration of pupil's own news by teacher.
- Practice of social greetings
- Daily reading activities
- Pupils continue/finish the story
- Questions based on the story
- Retelling in own words
- Drama – role play and miming based on stories
- Poetry & rhyme
- Use of puppets an dress-up box
- Naming objects
- Descriptive words
- Listen & respond to music
- Show and tell
- Send pupil on a message
- Emphasise appropriate vocabulary/sentence structure
- Many of these activities take place during Aistear

1st & 2nd (Stage 2)

- Talk and discussion.
- Circle Time.
- Role Play.
- Hot seating
- Brainstorming.
- Listening games
- Story telling
- Cross-age tutoring and sharing stories.
- Visitors to school/classroom
- News board
- Reciting poems and rhymes.
- Identifying word families, rhyming words, onsets and rimes.
- Teacher taps rhythm. Pupil repeats.
- Twenty questions.
- Silly sentence/word that shouldn't be there.
- Sounds inside/outside the classroom.
- Pupils take turns answering, door, going with messages.
- Introduce new words e.g. night words, scary words, magical words.
- Presentations to own/other class e.g. project, poem.
- Kim's Game – identify the missing object.
- 'What would you do if ...?'
- Finish the story.

3rd & 4th (Stage 3)

- General classroom conversation in all subject areas.
- Informal story-telling, life experiences, news, current affairs.
- Use of alternative words, phrases, sentence structures.
- Pass on a story – each child adds on.
- Describing a process
- Listening to and completing tasks
- Mime – charades.
- Use different tones of voice
- Role play
- Listen to a piece of music/video clip
- Investigating & describing moods.
- Hot-seating.
- Word webs.
- Act out sections of the class novel.
- Make list of questions – correct use of why, what, where, when as a reaction to a passage.
- Making and presenting of projects
- Social interactions- greeting/introducing visitor, answering the phone.
- Working in groups
- Verse speaking.

5th and 6th (Stage 4)

- Discussion – local, national and global issues, sport, pupils concerns and social issues.
- Debate topical issues e.g. homework.
- Instructions – giving, receiving, interpreting.
- Non-verbal communication.
- Assigning conversation to pictures.
- Character interviews.
- Character role plays – creating a story using a selection of characters.
- News telling.
- Narratives.
- Explanations.
- Story reconstruction – using sets of picture sequences, groups of pupils put the pictures into a logical sequence and practise retelling the story around the circle.
- Defending viewpoints.
- Story composition.
- Questioning.
- Creative injury – ‘What if?’
- Questioning and logic.
- Comparing and grouping.
- Brainstorming and building knowledge.
- Description activities.
- Circle Time.
- Communication skills – clear, distinct, concise, coherent.
- Respectful for communication.
- Etiquette and social conventions.

2.2 Reading:

Approach to Reading:

In our approach to reading, we consider the following:

- the children's general language development
- the central role of phonological and phonemic awareness
- the involvement of parents' in children's reading

These approaches will be recognised at all stages of children's acquisition of reading

We also draw on materials and ideas

at <https://curriculumonline.ie/Primary/Curriculum-Areas/Primary-Language/>

Print-Rich Environment

We are very conscious of the importance of a print-rich environment throughout all classes and a variety of examples of a print-rich environment are evident in our school including big books, picture books, independent reading books, charts of poems, songs and rhymes, labels, name charts, written materials produced by the children, jobs chart, timetables, word charts, magnetic surfaces and magnetic letters, charts of days, months, seasons etc.

Basic Sight Vocabulary

Basic sight vocabulary is an important component of the language base the child needs before embarking on a structured reading programme. It will be acquired from a number of sources, such as language experience material, large-format books, environmental print, labels around the room, flash cards, etc.

Sight vocabulary will be developed through selecting common words, core words, words from the reader and high interest words.

The first 60 Tricky Words from the Jolly Phonic Programme are known by the end of senior infants by most children.

The Dolch List words are taught formally in 1st & Second class.

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness will be developed through:

- Syllabic awareness – syllabic blending, syllable segmentation, syllable counting, syllable isolation.
- Nursery rhymes and rhyming poems, detecting rhymes in stories, rhyme judgement, rhyme generation.
- Jolly Phonics programme is now being followed in Junior Infants and Senior Infants.

The following skills will also be practiced in the early and lower classes.

- Phoneme deletion (e.g. Say gone without the “g” sound)
- Phoneme isolation (e.g. Being able to break up stamp into s t a m p)
- Phoneme substitution (Changing the 1st letter/middle vowel/final letter to make a new word)
- Phoneme transposition (swapping the 1st sound with the final sound: tap to pat)

Assessment of individual Phonological awareness: The class teachers and SETs will use informal/ formal tests and teacher observation to identify the

needs of individual children.

Reading Fluency

The primary strategies recognised in this school to enable children to identify words are their knowledge of letter-sound relationships (grapho-phonetic cues), their experiences and understanding of the world (meaning or semantic cues) and their knowledge of the forms of language (syntactic cues).

From the outset children are encouraged to look at letters in words, the shape of words, to sound out letters that they know, to look for little words in big words etc.

Other strategies used with the children every day are encouraging the children to look at the shape of the word, look for small words, breaking the word into syllables.

Comprehension Skills and Strategies

The following comprehension strategies are being developed throughout the school. Teachers adapt them to suit the age of the children. The strategies used for comprehension will vary according to the type of material being read. Comprehension skills are developed through oral work, teacher modelling and written work. **(Appendix for details)**

- Predicting
- Making connections
- Visualising (making a movie in your head/ what can you see / hear / feel)
- Comparing and contrasting
- Self-questioning
- Skimming and scanning

- Sequencing
- Determining importance
- Summarising and paraphrasing (getting the main idea)
- Synthesising

Strategies also include:

- Brainstorming
- KWL (What do I know, What do I want to know, What have I learnt)

Questioning Strategies

We teach the children the following strategies in determining their answers to questions.

- Here (Literal) - answer is in the text
- Hidden (inferential) - answer is hidden within the text
- Head (Evaluative) - answer is what I think
- Heart (Feeling) - answer is what I feel

Reading Material

In Doorus National School we aim to use a variety of reading material such as big books, class readers, parallel readers, poetry anthologies, fiction and non-fiction, etc.

Big Books are used in the infant classes to expose children to reading in order to develop their receptiveness to language. It also provides children with an opportunity to talk about reading and expose them to the conventions of print. Where possible storybooks are linked to the Aistear themes.

The class reader is used to develop reading skills such as word attack skills, vocabulary development, dictionary work, comprehension, information retrieval skills etc. Teachers ensure that their use of questioning on the class reader is differentiated to cater for the varying needs within the classroom.

Parallel readers serve to give children the opportunity to read independently at their level to ensure they view reading as an enjoyable activity, to develop fluency and heighten their self-esteem. The infant, lower, and middle classes are very well stocked with parallel readers. (Rainbow Readers CJ Fallon, Jolly Phonics Readers, Oxford Reading Tree, , etc). It is our aim that every child develop reading fluency and comprehension.

5th & 6th Class also use their class library and class sets of novels to develop their reading skills.

We recognise the importance of using reading material as a means to develop our children emotionally and imaginatively and engage in activities such as character development, discuss why they chose a particular text, talk or write about their response to material etc.

We have adopted a variety of approaches such as buddy reading, independent silent reading, group reading, whole class approach, use of the class novel etc and we aim to strike a balance throughout the year.

All classes have well-stocked class libraries which are regularly updated.

2.3 Writing:

The Process of Writing

The school's approach to writing concentrates on the writing process in order to develop the child's expressive and communicative abilities. Through the process of writing, children will explore a selection of independently-chosen topics, write using a variety of genres and write for different audiences. We also draw on materials and ideas

at <https://curriculumonline.ie/Primary/Curriculum-Areas/Primary-Language/>

Fostering the Process of Writing

The school will provide opportunities for children to write for real purposes and real audiences, recognising that drafting, editing and redrafting are at the heart of the writing process. Free writing will be used to enable the children to become independent writers. Free writing gives children the opportunity to express themselves without an added pressure of correct punctuation, spelling or grammar. Teachers do not correct these pieces, but rather give feedback to the children or help him to reflect on what they have written.

Genres of writing

The purpose of the writing and the audience for whom it is written will determine the genre. In Doorus National School, we choose one genre a month from 1st. to 6th.& the whole school teaches that genre at the same time. Infants work on one genre per term and cover all genres by the end of Senior Infants. We teach all the following genres. These will be developed as children progress through the school.

- Recount – school trip / Their weekend news (factual or imagined)
- Report writing – factual – e.g. life history of the butterfly – book review
- Explanatory writing – how a volcano is formed / how I made my robot
- Procedural writing – rules, directions, recipes
- Persuasive writing - debate
- Narrative – story (Creative & Imaginative Writing)

In teaching the genres of writing, the children will encounter the genres through reading/being read to, teacher-modelled writing, guided writing and

the use of writing frameworks, all leading to independent writing.
See **Appendix** for monthly Genre Writing plan

Planning/ Concept Mapping

Children are taught to plan their work prior to writing. Oral language is a key aspect of this process. Children are taught to use a variety of templates to plan their work.

Concept maps are visual representations students create to connect ideas, concepts, and terms. Students can use them to organize information they already know and to plan their work. They are used throughout the curriculum. Templates suggested by the PDST are available on each teacher's laptop.

Poetry

In order to develop the child emotionally and imaginatively we will encourage children to write a variety of poetry. Children will be given the opportunity to work as a whole class, in groups and pairs as well as individually when writing poetry and the writing of different types of poems will be modelled.

The following is a guide to writing poetry in the school:

Infants

Nursery Rhymes

Limericks

List Poems

1st / 2nd

Alphabet

Acrostic

Two line poems

Shape poems/ concrete

List poems

3rd and 4th / 5th and 6th

Shape

Acrostic

Pyramid Poem (can link to parts of speech)

Limerick

Similes

Personification

Alliteration and Onomatopoeia

Haiku

Cinquain

Limericks

Adding imagery

Write a poem in response to another poem

Handwriting

Good habits in handwriting are developed at an early stage e.g. posture, paper position, pencil grip. Each class will build on the skills learned the previous year.

See **Appendix** for a summary of how we teach and practice handwriting.

Grammar and Punctuation

In Doorus National School we aim to teach grammar and punctuation in the context of the children's own writing and/or reading and we emphasise the oral aspect of teaching. The main features of grammar and punctuation needed and taught at each level are outlined in the **Appendix**

2.4 Spelling

Spelling is a writer's tool. As they focus on spelling in the context of writing, children are taught a systematic understanding of the way the grapho-phonetic system works. In itself, spelling has no purpose and no audience, but in the context of writing, spelling becomes very important to both purpose and audience.

In Doorus NS, we recognise that spelling must be viewed as a fun activity by the children, and we acknowledge that spelling activities must be written as oral spelling is of little value. To this end, a multi-sensory approach, incorporating games is adopted. Phonics and spellings are closely linked. We understand that mastering spelling is a developmental process and when children attempt to master the complexities of English spelling they go through a number of overlapping developmental stages:

- using sound-letter relationships
- using pattern
- using meaning

Teachers place an emphasis on the teaching of Spelling. In keeping with this rationale, we will enable children to learn spellings through the Look and Say, Cover, Write and Check method. Spelling is assessed in a variety of methods. - children's own writing, teacher designed tasks, dictation and spelling tests.

2.5 Digital literacy

As new technologies continue to emerge and as a result of living in a society and culture increasingly influenced by digital technologies, digital literacy is an important aspect of children's learning. The curriculum supports children's abilities to engage with technology to acquire, comprehend and communicate knowledge to and with a variety of audiences and in a variety of contexts. Essential to the development of digital literacy is the child's ability to locate, select and critically analyse relevant information in multiple modes to include text, visual and audio. It also includes the capacity to engage with

digital technology in creative and imaginative ways.

The curriculum recognises that technology can be used as a tool for literacy development and learning. The definition of 'text' in the curriculum refers to all products of language use including electronic and digital. Appropriate use of digital technologies in the classroom can help children to demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding in accordance with the learning outcomes for all three strands of the curriculum. By enabling them to engage with digital technologies from the start of primary school, teachers can support children to foster a positive attitude towards the use of digital technologies and to use technology responsibly and appropriately. As children become digitally literate, they can use a variety of digital technologies to develop understanding and to source, critique and manage information as engaged thinkers and active learners

2.6 Critical literacy

Meaningful and active engagement with literacy requires us to go beyond traditional conceptions of what it means to understand what we read.

Critical readers not only understand what they are reading, they question it. Adopting a resistant stance helps children to identify power imbalances in the texts that shape their world and society at large.

Critical literacy involves actively identifying, analysing and challenging the perspectives offered in texts. It also involves questioning the influence of these viewpoints on our everyday lives. From a teaching perspective, it is supported by reading and listening to multiple texts, from multiple perspectives. Teachers facilitate critical literacy through carefully considering the texts that children encounter in their classroom and helping children to analyse who and what the texts represent. Children can also be supported to produce texts that consider alternative perspectives, that challenge the norm, or that explore under-represented voices. In applying their language and literacy skills in this way, they come to be active, thoughtful and critical contributors to the world in which they live.

Organisational Planning

3. Assessment and Record Keeping

Assessment is integral to teaching and the learning process. In Doorus National School, we value the different assessment tools that we use.

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Running Records and Free Writing
- Work samples, portfolios and reports
- Diagnostic tests e.g. Mist
- Standardised tests e.g. Drumcondra Reading & Maths (Senior Infants-Sixth.)

Each of these has a contribution to make in helping to monitor individual children's rates of progress and levels of attainment as they engage with the language curriculum and by using the information provided in them, we can build up a profile of each child as they progress through the school.

3.1 Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment

All children are encouraged to check their own work to assure it can be understood by the reader. The Infants to Second class use a simple rubrics and a variety of other assessment methods such as thumbs up, traffic lights & smiley faces. From 3rd. Class upwards, the children are taught to use the process called two stars & a wish. Children are also given opportunities to peer assess, reading the work of a peer.

In the SET setting, all of the above assessment methods are employed. Depending on the child's age and comprehension level.

4. Children with Different Needs

In the teaching of English in Doorus National School, we aim to ensure that all are included. Children progress at varying paces and all abilities are respected and catered for. The LS/RT supports language/literacy needs through team teaching/collaborative approach. Children with differing needs are identified through a number of different ways. These include: Teacher Observation, Teacher Tests, Parental Consultation, Standardised Tests and Diagnostic Tests.

Children who are very independent learners are encouraged to assist their peers in a spirit of co-operation. They are enabled to become tutors and benefit greatly from having to assist their peers in a kind and respectful way. We believe that this peer-learning benefits both tutor and tutee in a very positive way.

5. Equality of Participation and Access

All children are included and participate in all aspects of the Primary Language Curriculum.

6. Timetabling for English

Junior and Senior Infants spend 3.5hrs and 1st to 6th classes spend 4.5hrs per week on English. This is in line with circular 0056/2011. Integrated approach to English but discrete time is allocated to Oral Language. This time may be part of the Drama timetable.

7. Homework

A homework sheet is given support the work covered in the class. Homework may be oral or written. *(Refer to DNS Homework policy a more detailed account of homework in our school.)*

8. Library

Class Libraries

In our school, there is a library in each classroom. Each class teacher ensures that there is a variety of factual and fictional texts, poetry anthologies and texts in a range of genres. Each class teacher is responsible for organising their class library.

Mobile Library and County Library

We are visited by the travelling mobile library annually.

All children are encouraged to join their local library also. They have a choice of three libraries in our catchment area – Gort or Oranmore

9. Resources and Digital Learning

We are aware of the value of digital learning in the teaching and learning of English. (see Digital Literacy). Teachers use online resources, tools and apps. Examples include Google classroom, Class Dojo and seesaw. This whole area is under regular review because of the rapid rate of development in I.T. worldwide.

We are very aware of the value of learning basic word-processing skills so that the writing approach advocated in the curriculum can be adopted. Children are encouraged to publish some of their work in order to enhance the standard of presentation of their work, giving them added pride in the final product.

10. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

This English plan, along with the Primary Language Curriculum will inform and guide teachers in their long and short term programme of work in English. Teachers will refer to <https://curriculumonline.ie/Primary/Curriculum-Areas/Primary-Language/> for additional resources. Each teacher will keep a Cúntas Míósúil and this will inform our progress and needs when evaluating and reviewing our progress in English.

11. Staff Development

Staff development needs are identified through review and discussion at staff

meetings. When needs are identified, an action plan is devised to ensure that such needs are adequately addressed.

Our staff are participating in the new Primary Language Curriculum training (started in 2018).

12. Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is considered an integral part to effectively implementing English. In Doorus National School, we appreciate that parents are the primary educators and that therefore play a crucial role in the language development of their children.

13. Community Links

Doorus National School believes that the local community has an important role to play in supporting the programme in English.

Children's written work may be published for an audience outside of the school – via the school website and the write a book project.

Success Criteria

We will review this whole school plan under the following headings:

- Does individual teacher's preparation, planning and teaching reflect this plan?
- Are teachers communicating their concerns to each other?
- Are teachers sharing their expertise in certain areas of the teaching of English?

Oral Language

- Is there increased confidence and competence in communicating?
- Is there a greater willingness to express opinions and participate in class discussions?
- Are there improved listening skills?

Reading

- Are we satisfied with our standards in reading?
- Are children reading for pleasure?
- Is the involvement of parents being utilised fully?
- Do our pupils view reading as an enjoyable activity?

Writing

- Are written ideas expressed with good use of grammar, spelling and punctuation?
- Is handwriting neat and legible?
- Are written ideas expressed confidently and fluently, with good descriptive powers and use of appropriate vocabulary?
- Are children experiencing writing in a variety of genres?
- Do children share stories and poems?
- Is ICT used to support the writing process and to publish work?

The achievement of these success criteria will be assessed through feedback from teachers, pupils and parents.

IMPLEMENTATION

(a) Roles and Responsibilities

This plan will be supported, developed and implemented by all staff members.

(b) Timeframe

The plan has been implemented.

It was reviewed and revised in 2022.

REVIEW

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum

implementation of the English curriculum in the school. All the staff are responsible for co-ordinating this review.

RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION:

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management.

This plan is available to view at the school by the parents.